



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
State Laboratory Institute
Amherst, MA 01003

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Affidavit Opposing Access to the Amherst Drug Laboratory

I, James L. Hanchett, do hereby state the following:

Allowing defense attorneys, investigators, and/or experts access to the Amherst Drug Laboratory would have drastic effects on our production levels, compromise sample continuity, and increase security risks.

The laboratory serves the four western counties of Massachusetts (Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin and Berkshire), as well as parts of Worcester, Bristol, and Plymouth counties. Annually over 5000 drug samples are received and analyzed in Amherst from over 125 different agencies. In the aftermath of the Melendez-Diaz decision, the laboratory is indeed busy. Our four employees must handle the workload generated by 97 state courts as well as two federal courts. In 2010, we were summoned for 706 cases. Preparation hours, travel time, and court time are astronomical. All the while, drug samples must still be analyzed.

Allowing outside personnel access to the laboratory increases our security risks by escalating awareness of the laboratory and its location, compromises sample integrity, and essentially shuts down the laboratory. Every chemist in the laboratory must stop their drug analyses and store away any evidence or drugs from other cases. Automated instruments that run for hours at a time to analyze one batch of drug samples must be unloaded and shut down with their labeled vials stored out of view. Allowing visitors to the laboratory opens up questions on cross about chain of evidence, errors in shuffling samples around out of turn, and access to the laboratory and to the drugs.

Granting defense attorneys and their entourage access to the Amherst Drug Laboratory creates a significant undue hardship for the laboratory and its personnel.

Signed this 9th day of March, 2011.

James L. Hanchett
Laboratory Supervisor
Amherst Drug Laboratory
Amherst, MA